



**SAB EPEC Review of the  
Ecological Assessment Action Plan  
February 22, 2012**

***Enhancing the Use of  
Ecological Risk Assessment in  
Agency Decision Making  
RAF Technical Panel***

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RAF Ecological Oversight Committee



## ***Technical Panel Members***

- Mary Reiley (OW), – Co-chair
- Marc Greenberg (Superfund) – Co-chair
- Lawrence Martin (RAF staff)
- Tala Henry (OPPT)
- Craig Barber (ORD)
- Matt Nicholson (R-3)
- Bill Eckel (OPP)
- Burt Shephard (R-10)
- Seema Schappelle (ORD)
- Ginger Tennant (OAR)
- Tom Gardner (OW/OST)
- Joe Piotrowski (OW/OWOW)
- Sharon Osowski Morgan (R-6)



# ***The Challenge***

- **Communicating Ecological Risk Assessment Results to Decision Makers**
- Agency ecological risk assessors identified the limited use of ecological risk assessment results by Agency decision makers as a significant challenge.
- Recent reports (SAB October 2007, NRC 2008) urge the Agency to make better use of ecological risk assessment findings.
- Ecological risk assessment results are not used consistently across programs, and are not having the expected impact on decision making.



# *Objectives*

- EPA has confidence in ERA information and uses it fully in environmental policy & decisions.
- ERA and ecosystem services information meets risk managers' and decision makers' needs and is communicated with proper context and in useable form.



# ***Engaging Risk Assessors, Risk Managers, and Decision Makers***

- Using questionnaires, interviews, and small group discussion to explore ERA communication experiences between risk assessors and decision makers.
  - Risk Assessors
  - Risk Managers and Decision Makers





# ***Potential Products***

- Guidance to risk assessors: how to engage decision makers in ERA design so the results will be of value to them.
- Guidance to risk assessors: how to present ERA information to make it useful and important to decision makers.
- Guidance to decision makers: the utility of ERA information in support of decision making.
- Materials for managers on the nature of ecological risks.
- Webinar, seminar training, or information sharing.
- Other tools and products that are identified during the interviews.



## ***Charge Question***

- Please comment on whether the RAF's planned project for communication of ecological assessment issues and results to decision makers and stakeholders is an appropriate way to proceed.
- What obstacles might exist to either interpreting or utilizing ecological information in risk assessment.
- Please include any observations on why ERA has or has not been well incorporated into decision making in general.